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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#). Mideast
- [1](#)2. U.S.-Israel Security Exports Crisis

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Key stories in the media:  
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All major newspapers, except Yediot, led with PM Sharon's ongoing cordial visit to France. Maariv bannered: "Embrace From France." Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that Sharon urged French President Jacques Chirac to restrain Hizbullah during the disengagement move, and that Chirac stated that Syria, and not Iran, is the factor interested in escalation at the Israel-Lebanon border. Still, the media reported that Chirac stressed the nuclear threat posed by Iran. Ha'aretz quoted Chirac as saying that the USG had asked him to bring up the issue of strengthening PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas's "defenseless" security forces with Sharon. Ha'aretz reported that Chirac asked that Israel allow France to supply the Palestinian forces with ammunition.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz was quoted as saying in an interview with Ha'aretz that he hopes that the pullout from the Gaza Strip will take two, or at most three weeks. Mofaz expressed his belief that the Gaza Strip settlers are beginning to come to terms with the idea of evacuating their settlements. Yediot reported that a battalion of Egyptian border guards is supposed to be deployed along the Philadelphi route during the second week of August.

Yediot led with secret efforts by settlers to thwart the disengagement. The newspaper quoted Israeli defense sources as saying that, while the settler leaders have proclaimed a march from Sderot to Gush Katif on Tuesday, they are planning two other secret mass protests along other routes, in order to wear out the security forces. Yediot reported that the IDF and police fear that tens of thousands of right-wingers who intend to go to Sderot could stay in places considered within the closest range of the Qassam rockets. Israel Radio reported that on Wednesday, security forces ran through the "abduction" of an IDF soldier by settlers during the disengagement. Hatzofe disclosed that the Israel Navy has rented barges in a European country, which will transport buses carrying evacuated settlers from the Gaza coast to Ashdod, in order to bypass pro-settler land blocks.

Ha'aretz reported that the FBI is demanding that Naor Gilon, head of the political department at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, be interrogated in connection to the Pentagon spy case. Israel 10-TV reported that FBI agents are planning to come to Israel. Ha'aretz quoted Israeli sources as saying that no federal agents had arrived here. The newspaper writes that the American request was discussed a few weeks ago at an interministerial meeting in Jerusalem. Ha'aretz says that the consensus was that neither Gilon nor other officials should be allowed to undergo investigation by the FBI, but that Israel would be prepared to respond in writing to questions. The newspaper says that the U.S. demand is the clearest indication that the U.S. believes Israel is involved in the Larry Franklin case, which until now has been presented as an internal American affair.

Yediot reported that warning systems against Qassam rockets will be installed in Ashkelon following assessments that such weapons could soon reach the city. Israel Radio reported that rockets were launched at Israeli communities in and around the Gaza Strip last night and this morning, causing no casualties. Ha'aretz quoted Palestinian sources as saying that Israel Defense Forces troops killed a 17-year old unarmed Palestinian and wounded seven Palestinians, one seriously, during a gun battle in the West Bank city of Jenin on Wednesday.

Maariv reported that on Wednesday, the Hadassah-Ein Kerem Hospital in Jerusalem refused to admit an ambulance carrying a severely ill Palestinian patient, in contravention of a law providing for universal treatment.

Ha'aretz quoted Yuval Steinitz, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, as saying on Wednesday that the U.S. should not be able to extend its oversight of Israeli defense exports to third countries, such as India and Turkey, as it may harm Israel's military industries. Steinitz's comments came in response to a report in Wednesday's Ha'aretz about the mounting crisis between the U.S. and Israel over Israel's sale of replacement parts for attack drones sold to China. Steinitz was quoted as saying that this was the worst crisis in U.S.-Israeli relations.

Ha'aretz reported that on Wednesday, the Knesset passed substantial, stringent amendments to the proposed "Intifada Law," which minimizes the ability of Palestinians injured in the Intifada to sue the state for damages. The amended bill was approved in its final readings by 54 Knesset members from Likud, Labor, Shinui, National Religious Party, and National Union. It was opposed by 15 Knesset members from Meretz-Yahad and the Arab parties, as well as MK Yuli Tamir (Labor). Leading media also reported that the Knesset voted 59-12 on Wednesday to grant citizenship to Palestinians married to Israeli citizens only if the Palestinian men are 35 and older and if the women are 25 and older.

Ha'aretz reported that a special delegation of UN experts met with representatives of the GOI and Israeli defense companies this week to investigate suspicions that Israeli businessmen and companies may have violated the UN Security Council embargo prohibiting arms sales to the Ivory Coast. The newspaper says that this is the first time Israel has cooperated with a panel of this kind.

Jerusalem Post reported that, for the second time in less than two months, Israel was tapped Tuesday to fill a significant role inside the UN bureaucratic apparatus as deputy chair of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Meir Itzhaki, the Foreign Ministry's deputy director for arms control, will take up the post and be part of the Commission's eight-member presidency.

Yediot reported that the Foreign Ministry was surprised to hear that the UN General Assembly will once again be requested to condemn Israel's raid on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor on June 7, 1981. The newspaper cited the ministry's belief that the new Iraqi government had raised the issue this year.

Jerusalem Post reported on the role of the non-profit organization, Children of Abraham, which was honored at President Moshe Katsav's residence on Wednesday. The organization was founded in 1996 by a group of Palestinian and Israeli educators.

Maariv reported that NASA has asked the Tel Aviv-based company Fabo Web (phon.) to help fix a series of glitches discovered in the space shuttle Discovery before its launching.

Yediot reported that a group of Chinese bankers and investors linked to the Chinese government, who are interested in competing for control of Bank Leumi, Israel's second largest bank, arrived in Israel last week and held talks with GOI officials.

Yediot reported that the American International School in Kfar Shmaryahu was sold this week for USD 21 million to private entrepreneurs who intend to turn the plot into a housing project.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:

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Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "This is a declaration of war on the part of a defined group of settlers against the regime and its democratically elected institutions."

Liberal columnist Meron Benvenisti wrote in Ha'aretz: "The 'unilateralism' is an attempt to turn back the wheel to the period when Israel tried to rob the Palestinians of the ability to decide their future on the grounds that they were not a legitimate collective entity but rather 'terrorists.'"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented in popular, pluralist Maariv: "There is a danger that the Arabists in Washington are returning to the position they held before the U.S. war campaign in Afghanistan, i.e. that there are two kinds of terror."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Too often where the region is concerned ... Paris has interpreted 'leadership' in terms of opposing the United States. This is a shame, because France, with its particular history, ties and credibility in the Arab world, truly could play a much more prominent role."

Block Quotes:  
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I. "Moving Toward War in Gush Katif"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (July 28): "[Recent acts of defiance by disengagement opponents] can no longer be considered acts of protest. This is a declaration of war on the part of a defined group of settlers against the regime and its democratically elected institutions. Such a concentrated series of violations of the law, provocations and hostility would not be permitted anywhere within Israel, and it is not necessary to use one's imagination to envisage what would happen to Palestinians or Israeli Arab citizens were they to trample the law so arrogantly.... Indeed the historic mission imposed on the IDF and the police, to evacuate and be evacuated from the Gaza Strip, will not end with the mere physical pullout. It is necessary to try to limit not only the chance of a violent confrontation during the evacuation but also to make efforts not to leave scars that are too deep when the evacuees are resettled. Only a policy of an uncompromising iron fist toward relatively small groups of lawbreakers, rebels against the state, can assist in this."

II. "90 Years of Unilateralism"

Liberal columnist Meron Benvenisti wrote in Ha'aretz (July 28): "It is clear why Ariel Sharon (and his yes-men) stress the 'unilateral' aspect, for in this way he destroys the last vestige of the Oslo process, which is based on recognition of the Palestinians as a legitimate entity that represents a collective with the right to determine its own needs and aspirations and the ways of obtaining them. The 'unilateralism' is an attempt to turn back the wheel to the period when Israel tried to rob the Palestinians of the ability to decide their future on the grounds that they were not a legitimate collective entity but rather 'terrorists'.... It appears that the slogan of 'unilateralism' based on the 'lack of a partner' is meant to free [groups that have traditionally espoused dialogue] of the need to wrestle with the legitimate claims of the other side and to justify the use of -- immeasurably greater -- force by the Israeli side."

III. "A Double Loss"

Middle East affairs commentator Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (July 28): "Astonishingly, it turns out that Israel's decision-makers have recently agreed to the opening of independent seaport and airport in the Gaza Strip. At that very moment, the discussion about the Philadelphia route and the Egyptian security strip evaporated, since the Palestinians will no longer have a need to smuggle weapons in unfeasible ways through tunnels in the Sinai; they'll be able to do so directly, openly, and elegantly using their own planes and ships. As far as Israel is concerned, this situation is absurd: Egypt has succeeded in eroding the demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula in exchange for a promise to protect the Gaza Strip's southern exits -- bringing significant strategic damage to Israel for generations -- while the Palestinians will no longer need an exit route to Egypt. Thus, Israel will pay a double price for its

folly, and in the future reassume security responsibility for the Gaza Strip, in the absence of any other responsible element."

#### IV. "Peril of an American Trap"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented in popular, pluralist Maariv (July 28): "There is an unpleasant feeling of a concern of an American trap. The administration knows well that Abu Mazen hasn't made any serious step against Hamas or the other terror groups. Conversely, not only Abu Mazen, but also the United States, don't care whether a civil war erupts in Israel -- the important being that the disengagement takes place, because it apparently is the only achievement that the U.S. can present in its Middle East policy.... There is a danger that the Arabists in Washington are returning to the position they held before the U.S. war campaign in Afghanistan, i.e. that there are two kinds of terror: the international one -- against which the U.S. conducts an all-out war, including in Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia -- and the 'national' one, such as the continuing one between Israel and the Palestinians. That supposedly is a different type of terror, to which the Jews must surrender.... What is interesting is that when Rice served as national security advisor in the White House, she made sure that Israel wouldn't fall into the trap of the twisted conception advocating appeasement."

#### IV. "The PM in Paris"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (July 28): "France has much it can contribute to contain the Islamist menace that threatens its own population as well as other Europeans. Few countries are better positioned to press Lebanon to combat Hizbullah. France is likewise in an excellent position to persuade Iran to desist from its nuclear ambitions before it's too late. Too often where the region is concerned, and especially in the Israeli-Palestinian context, Paris has interpreted 'leadership' in terms of opposing the United States. This is a shame, because France, with its particular history, ties and credibility in the Arab world, truly could play a much more prominent role if it were genuinely ready now to switch from the role of spoiler and onto a more constructive tack. This would be genuinely appreciated by Israelis and would go much farther than the million-euro PR campaign Paris has announced to try and facelift its image in this country. And apart from helping Israel and the cause of Middle East harmony, it would be rather good for France."

#### ----- 12. U.S.-Israel Security Exports Crisis: -----

##### Summary: -----

Ultra-Orthodox Yated Ne'eman editorialized: "At this time too, the Western power [the United States] is demanding that the Israeli government acknowledge ... that it not pretend to demonstrate independence in its foreign relations."

##### Block Quotes: -----

"The Crisis With Washington"

Ultra-Orthodox Yated Ne'eman editorialized (July 28): "Despite ... affirmations that it wouldn't give in to American demands, the Israeli government can't afford sanctions that would harm bilateral defense deals, joint projects, and information exchanges concerning advanced weapons systems, particularly when those sanctions would be directed at all of [Israel's] defense industries.... If someone thought that the implementation of the disengagement plan would ensure a forgiving attitude on Washington's part, it turns out that, at this time too, the Western power is demanding that the Israeli government acknowledge its proper place and that it not pretend to demonstrate independence in its foreign relations."

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